



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 15 2004

OFFICE OF
WATER

MEMORANDUM

Subject: FY2005 Wetland Program Development Grants (104(b)(3)) Regional Competition

From: John Meagher, Director *John W. Meagher*
Wetlands Division

To: Regional Water Division Directors
Environmental Services Division Director, Region 3

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information and procedures for the Regional competition of the Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDG) for FY2005. This year, Regions must issue their own solicitation for their Regional competition. You must use the attached WPDGs Request for Proposals (RFP) as a template for your RFP. The attached RFP is in the mandatory OMB format and must be used if the Region is issuing its own RFP. The items in bold in the attached RFP are the areas that need to be modified by the Region.

Some key points of this year's grant program are:

1. The announcement continues to include a section on "Funding Priorities" which encourages S/T/LGs to: 1) strengthen state/tribal comprehensive wetland programs, 2) develop a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program; 3) improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation; and 4) refine the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. The WPDG priorities support the State/Tribal Environmental Outcome Wetland Demonstration Pilot Program, because States and Tribes that cannot compete effectively in the pilot program may seek funds to fill gaps in their programs with WPDG.
2. States, Tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia continue to be eligible.
3. Regional Offices are encouraged to fund State and Tribal proposals to monitor and assess the quantity and condition of their wetlands to support EPA's Program Activity Measure IV-WD-5 as specified in the Fiscal Year 2005 National Water Program Guidance.
4. Regional Offices should continue to target at least 15 percent of their allocation to support tribal and local government proposals. Regions are encouraged to fund tribal

proposals which involve watershed-based wetlands and stream corridor projects. This supports EPA's Program Activity Measure IV-WD-3 as specified in the Fiscal Year 2005 National Water Program Guidance.

5. Regions are encouraged to target at least 80% of their competitive WPDG funds to projects that focus on one or more of the identified program priorities.
6. State/Tribal/Local match for this grant program continues to be at least 25 percent of the total project cost.
7. Recipients of grants for wetland monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STORage and RETrieval) database.
8. The Wetland Program Development Grants will continue to be awarded on a competitive basis to support development of State and Tribal wetland programs.
9. Regions must send a draft of the Regional RFP to Connie Cahanap (cahanap.concepcion@epa.gov), the Regional Grants Office, and the Office of Regional Counsel for review and concurrence.
10. Synopses of all announcements for competition must be posted in the fedgrants.gov internet site, <http://fedgrants.gov>. The Grants Competition Advocate's Office will post the synopsis of the announcement at the fedgrants.gov website.

The key areas that EPA and OW want to emphasize as you prepare to implement this grant program are: 1) ensuring that we understand the environmental results of the grants awarded by the Agency and how they support our Strategic Plan, and 2) that a high priority is placed on the effective management of grants.

1. OW encourages the Regional Offices to ensure that each assistance agreement supports in some way the major goals and objectives of the current Strategic Plan. Based on a final interim policy (GPI-04-02) issued by OGD in January 2004, all decision memoranda for assistance agreements must at a minimum include a statement linking the outcomes of the assistance agreement to the overall goals and objectives of OW's Strategic Plan. The policy also encourages programs to establish linkages down to the sub-objective and program activity measures, if possible.
2. Effective grants management is a high priority for the Agency and OW. OW wants to ensure that the following areas are emphasized when managing these new assistance agreements:
 - OW is committed to promoting competition in awarding grants. The policy is to ensure a fair and open process, with no applicant receiving unfair advantage when competing grants. EPA Order 5700.5, effective September 30, 2002, includes the requirements for implementing this policy. Since the WPDG is designed to award grants competitively, please ensure that these requirements are followed.

- OW is committed to ensuring effective oversight of assistance agreements. EPA Order 5700.6, effective January 8, 2003, streamlines post-award management of assistance agreements and helps ensure effective oversight of recipient performance and management. The order encompasses both the administrative and programmatic aspects of the Agency's financial assistance programs. It requires each EPA office providing assistance to develop and carry out a post-award monitoring plan, and conduct basic monitoring for every award. From the programmatic standpoint, this monitoring should ensure satisfaction of five core areas: (1) compliance with all programmatic terms and conditions, (2) correlation of the recipient's work plan/application and actual progress under the award, (3) availability of funds to complete the project, (4) proper management of and accounting for equipment purchased under the award, and (5) compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements of the program. Advanced monitoring is also required of a minimum number of grants, to be determined by each Regional and Headquarters Office. Both levels of oversight must be documented in the official grant file.

Thank you for continuing to make the WPDGs a success. We are impressed by the sustained interest and energy shown by State, Tribal, and local governments, and the support and encouragement provided by the Regions. We are also grateful for the Regions for their role in our retooling the grants program to link our investments with measurable environmental outcomes. If you have any questions, please call Connie Cahanap at (202) 566-1382. We look forward to working with you and your staff on the WPDG.

Attachments

cc: Regional Wetland Branch Chiefs
Regional Wetland Coordinators
Regional Wetland Grant Coordinators